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John Allen Chalk: Personal Correspondence

John Allen Chalk

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1-10-1958

From: Ray Ferris

Ray Ferris

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# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN RACINE

## MAILING ADDRESS:

P. O. Box #253  
Racine, Wisconsin  
Phone ME 3-9533

423 Randolph Street

Racine, Wisconsin

January 10, 1958

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

### Sundays:

Bible Study — 9:45 a.m.  
Assembly Worship — 10:45 a.m.  
Evening Worship — 7:00 p.m.

### Wednesdays:

Bible Study — 7:30 p.m.

Mr. John Allen Chalk  
2001 Division Avenue  
Dayton 14, Ohio

Dear Brother Chalk:

In accordance with your recent conversation with bro. Bean while you were visiting in Mississippi, we are presenting the following information in the hope that the church where you labor will see fit to give us some financial aid. It is our understanding that you will present the matter to the elders there.

On July 18, 1948, seven Christians met together for their first assembly as a new congregation in Racine, Wisc. These people had been meeting with the colored brethren in the city, or with the 35th and Cherry congregation in Milwaukee, 25 miles to the north.

During the first years of worship the church met in various rented halls and in private homes. This was, of course, highly unsatisfactory. In the summer of 1952, with the help of other congregations and individuals, a building was purchased from the Racine Reformed Church for \$10,000. Although not desirable from many standpoints at the time, it was the only building in the city that could even be considered for purchase, and building a new one was entirely out of the question. Although inadequate in some respects, it has been greatly superior to prior arrangements.

The original loan on the building was for \$6,000, to be paid in 10 years at \$60.78 per month including principal and interest. Realizing the need to relieve ourselves of this monthly expense as soon as possible, we have attempted to shorten the loan period. On two separate occasions (November of 1957 was the last one, and February of 1956 was the first) we have made special payments on the principal only. These payments have enabled us to shorten the period of the loan by 18 months, and have saved us \$195.56 in interest. Our present balance is \$2108.12.

The Trinity Lane church in Nashville, Tennessee, began supporting bro. Billy Boyd in Racine in the fall of 1952. He was the first full time preacher in this work. Their support consisted of \$250.00 per month plus half of his house rent. The other half of the house rent was provided by the Broadway church in Paducah, Kentucky. The church here supplemented this income as much as possible, and gradually cut

down the outside help as they were able. First the rent was taken over, and then Trinity Lane was told we could get along with only \$200.00 per month outside help in 1957. They have again reduced this support for 1958; this time to \$150.00 per month. We had requested them to continue the full \$200.00 yet for this year if possible. Our present outside support is only \$150.00 per month, plus a few individual contributions from time to time.

In November of 1954 it was decided the time was right to establish a congregation in Kenosha, Wisconsin, just 8 miles south of Racine. Several members of the church here lived in Kenosha at the time and began meeting with the new group, thus taking a great portion of the active members from Racine. The Kenosha church is doing a fine work now.

Our present membership stands at 32, including in that number some who are very weak spiritually. Our average attendances for 1957 for all services were: Bible Study - 33; Sunday at 10:45 - 46; Sunday evening - 26; and Wednesday evening - 17. Our contributions averaged \$93.24 per Sunday including the small individual contributions from outside. Our budget had called for \$100.00 per week.

The building we are now in is rapidly becoming more and more unsuitable. The fire department has condemned the furnace arrangement and the electrical wiring. We do not think it wise to expend more money to repair the building unless we absolutely must. We have been able to stall them off so far, but do not know how long we will be able to do so. The roof will not last much longer, and a complete paint job will be needed again soon.

The location of the building is very poor from two standpoints - environment and difficulty in locating. Our property adjoins the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, a very active line with passenger and freight trains scheduled during services! The neighborhood is almost completely filled with colored people, or with people who are of some sort of foreign extraction. We have been unable to reach them at all with the gospel. For our own membership, they do not hurt the environment, but many people will not attend services in the neighborhood, thinking we are all colored, Mexican, etc. That is true even here in the north in very many instances.

The building is on a street only two blocks long, accessible only from two streets that are also very short and from the depot alley. The name of the street was changed a few years ago, and most of the native residents of Racine do not even know where it is. All this together makes it

very inaccessible and difficult to locate. We feel we must be looking forward to a new location as soon as possible.

Due to the reduction of our support from Trinity Lane, a repetition of our budget for last year would have necessitated another \$12.00 per week from our own contributions for 1958; \$12.00 beyond what we aimed for that is, and about \$19.00 beyond what we did. After reducing everything we could and raising some things that had to be raised, still leaving in a small sum for a building fund, we have estimated our 1958 needs at \$114.00 per week in addition to what we receive from Trinity Lane. This is \$20.76 per week more than we actually contributed in 1957, and is, to say the least, planning "very optimistically." Work is pretty slow here right now.

A detailed and itemized copy of this budget will be forwarded to you if you are interested, and desire it.

Racine is a city of more than 80,000 people, and the metropolitan area exceeds 125,000. These people must have the gospel or perish. We need more help to help them as we should. Churches in this area are too weak to provide the assistance we need. We do not know how much you brethren could help, but we would surely appreciate anything you could do, whether great or small.

Here is our present goal. We still owe at the moment \$2108.12 on our building. We are paying \$60.78 per month on the loan. The last payment consisted of \$53.57 on the principal and \$7.21 interest. We would like to pay the remainder of this sum immediately, or as soon as possible and establish sufficient money in a building fund to buy good lots for a future building site. This building fund would be supplemented each month by the total amount (principal and interest) we are now paying on our loan if at all possible, and more if we could, until we could actually go ahead with plans for the new building. The lot would be selected and contracted for at the earliest date a suitable location could be found.

A real estate company in Milwaukee has tentatively suggested they would consider our old building in as a trade on a new one they will construct and finance for us if and when we can make our move. We hope and pray you can help us accomplish just that in the not too distant future. We would have to pay about \$35,000 to \$40,000 dollars, less our old building, for the new one which would be complete with basement, baptistry, heating plant, etc.

We would be most happy for the elders - one or all - to come here and investigate our situation. You may feel free to write others for a recommendation. The following preachers in this area are very well acquainted with the history

Mr. John Allen Chalk

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of this church: Leslie Diestelkamp, 2331 S. Lombard Avenue, Cicero 50, Illinois; Monroe Hawley, 3413 S. Alabama Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Billy Boyd, P. O. Box #534, Waukesha, Wisconsin. You may write these men and/or any of the churches in this area about the work here.

We are thankful to God for His abundant blessings of the past, and are grateful for all the churches and individuals who have supported us financially. We are especially grateful for those who are continuing to do so, and try to keep them informed of progress, problems, etc.

May the Lord encourage you to help us if you can, and please remember us and our work in your prayers to God.

Your brethren,  
The church of Christ  
in Racine, Wisconsin

The writing of this letter was discussed in our last business meeting. It was agreed that a group of us would assemble and prepare a list of the things that should be included in it, and a draft made from this list. This was done, and the draft was approved as given above. I was then asked to type the material in final form and sign it for the church.

May the Lord bless the church there and everywhere.

Your bro. in HIM,

*Ray Ferris*  
Ray Ferris